

EFFECTS OF MORTAR IN MASONRY DESIGN

DESIGNING IN BRICK

MORTAR & JOINTS



Glen-Gery

Effects of Mortar in Masonry Design

Mortar is often used in masonry design not just for a practical purpose, but also as a design element. Mortar is placed between bricks or stones when building to bind them together. In addition to being the glue that holds together building materials, mortar can completely change the look and feel of a masonry design project.

Approximately twenty percent of a brick wall's surface is mortar. As such, it has a significant effect on the building's overall appearance, and truly has the power to transform the entire visual experience of the building. The range of mortar colors and joints create numerous opportunities for architects, builders and homeowners to enrich the look of their buildings or homes.

MORTAR COLOR

Utilizing a colored mortar, instead of a standard gray, and different design techniques can completely transform the visual experience of a building.

Match or Contrast

The right mortar color can blend in with and accent the brick itself. This brings the dominant shade to the forefront, creating a visually pleasing design effect. Alternatively, the mortar can contrast with the brick facing to produce unusual and memorable visual effects. This has more of a compelling and eye-catching appearance for those who are seeking a standout look for a building.

Play Up Single Colors

Another way to use colored mortar is to pick one of the colors from brick units that cover a range of tones. Whether it matches one brick color within a blend or one shade within multicolored units, the mortar will tend to make the color more visible overall. When you use mortar to play up a single color in this way, it can make the wall's overall tone lighter or darker, warmer or cooler.

Accentuate Patterns

Sometimes, two or more mortar colors are used to accentuate patterns in masonry. Quoins, bands and other ornamental elements can add character to a project, but they can have an even greater visual impact when paired with matching mortar to set them apart from the field masonry. This can create an overall captivating effect with the aesthetic of the building.



Woodsmoked Handmade with Black Mortar



Woodsmoked Handmade with Grey Mortar



Woodsmoked Handmade with White Mortar

MORTAR JOINTS

Mortar joints themselves can also transform the overall appearance of a building or surface. Mortar joints fill the space between the bricks. This is an important functional aspect of mortar. However, the type of mortar joint chosen in masonry construction will also govern the overall visual of surfaces.

Different mortar joint profiles not only provide a variety of looks, but also contribute to the water resistance needed to ensure the longevity of the building. Although there are many mortar joint profiles, there are a few types that can specifically work wonders to impact design.



CONCAVE OR GROOVE JOINT

This is the style you will see on most brick structures where the mortar has a slight curve inward. Bricklayers will use a curved jointing tool to create the concave joints, which can look like the mortar has been lightly pressed by a finger. This look is a clean, subtle and classic way to use mortar as a design element in masonry.

VEE OR V JOINT

Similar to concave or groove joints, but with a little more dynamism, the V joint features a V-shaped indentation instead of a smooth curve. This mortar joint style is more sleek and modern, making it a good choice for those seeking a contemporary design flair for their home or building.



Barely Grey Klaycoat with Concave Joint



Blend of 52-DD and 53-DD with Vee Joint



RAKED JOINT

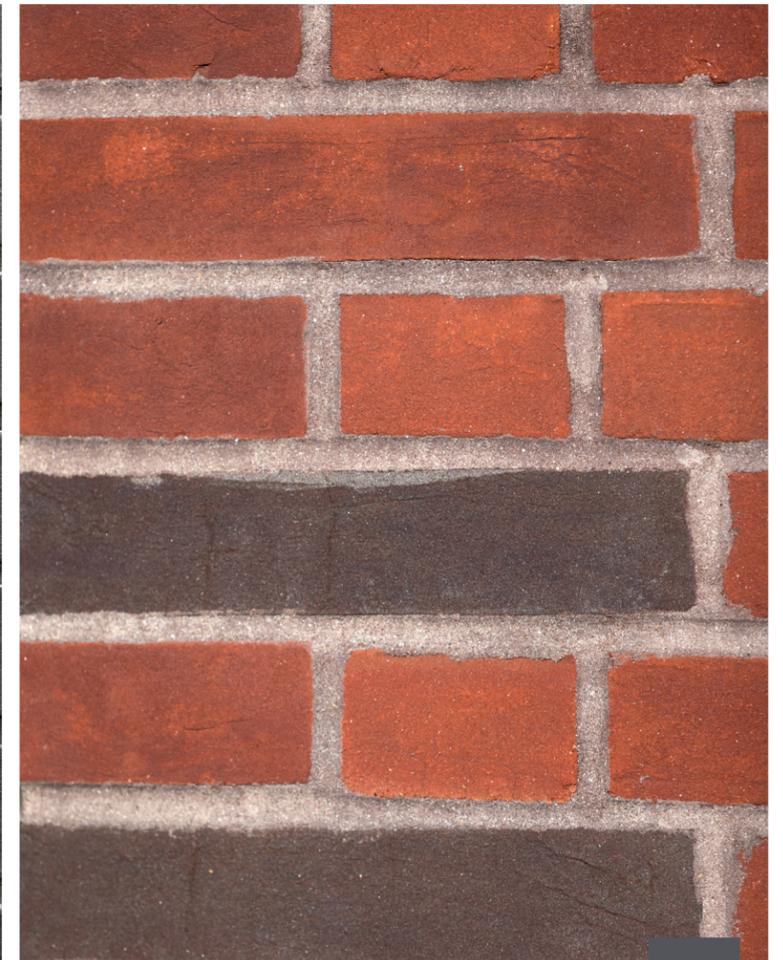
Older brick and mortar walls commonly have raked joints, which are flat mortar joints slightly recessed from the front edge of the brick. Raked mortar does not come all the way to the edge of the bricks, as the mortar is raked out to expose the edge of the bricks. While this can affect the mortar's efficiency in keeping out moisture, it is also used as a design feature in modern masonry design.

FLUSH JOINT

Flush-style mortar joints involve mortar that is directly level with the brick face. There is no curve, dent or indentation in the mortar like you would find in other joint styles. The flushed joint offers a clean look, but it is difficult to create a tight bond between the brick and mortar.



Romero with Raked Joint



Blend of 52-DD and 53-DD with Flush Joint

GRAPEVINE JOINT

Historically, the grapevine joint was very popular during the colonial era of architecture in the United States. It is made using a grapevine jointer, which is a metal blade with a raised bead that creates a depressed line in the center of the mortar joint. The lines are mostly rough and wavy, which gives the slightly irregular appearance of a grapevine. Typically, mortar joints are straight, so this type of joint offers a very stylized look. This joint is mostly used on antique finish and matte finish brickwork.



EXTRUDED OR SQUEEZED JOINT

The look of the extruded or squeezed joint is very highly textured and rustic, making it an interesting aesthetic choice for those who are looking for a particularly rough or stylized visual effect to their mortar and masonry. Squeezed joints are commonly seen in indoor architecture and outdoor fences.



OVERMORTAR (German Smear)

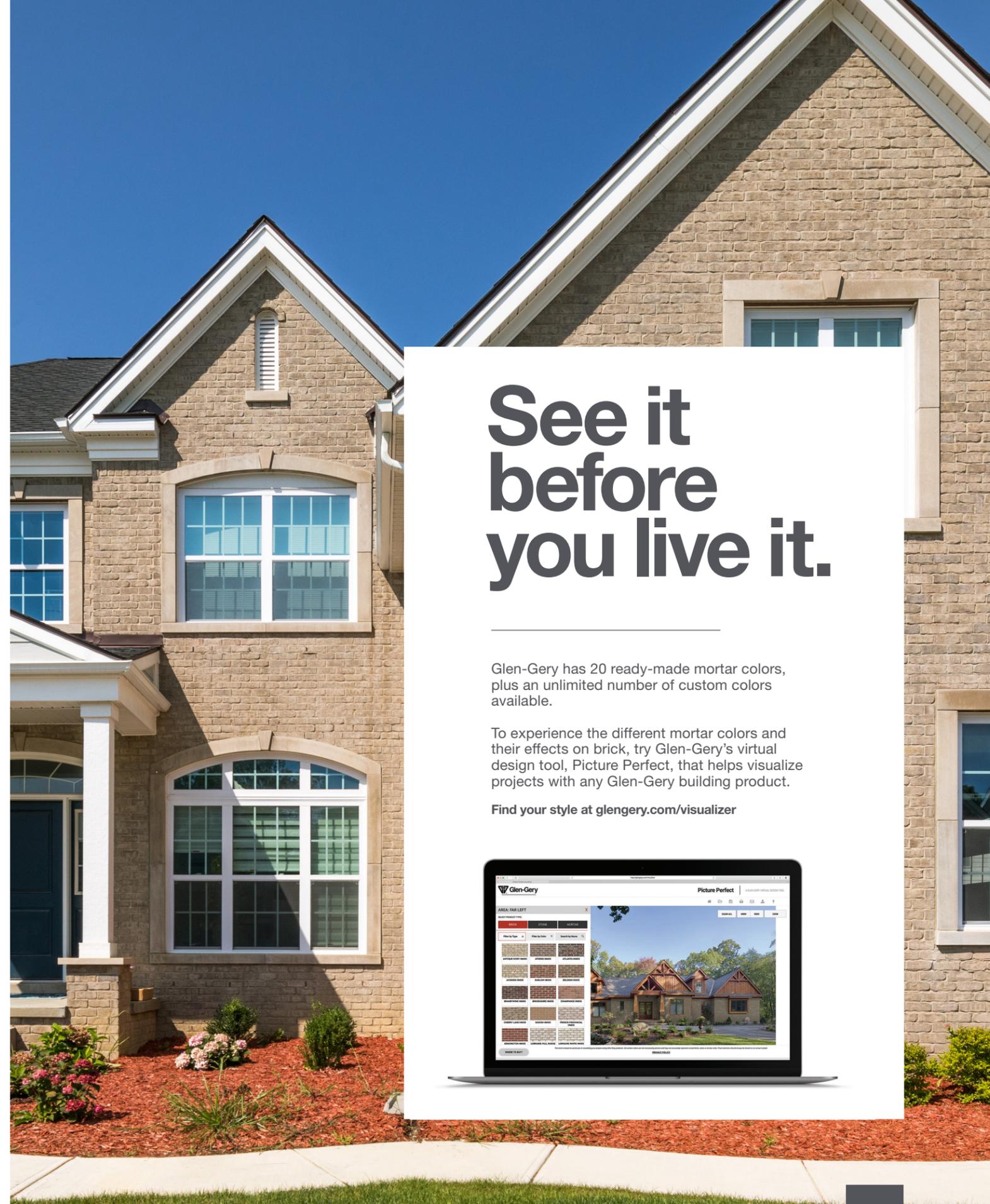
Overmortar or “German Smear” is a trendy design treatment that involves using mortar outside the joints. The mason lays the brick and strikes the mortar joints, then comes back and uses the trowel like a brush, spreading a thin coating of mortar over the brick façade. The technique allows the natural brick color to come through while creating a rough, distressed texture. When complete, the finished effect mimics the look of irregular stones and heavy mortar joints, a rustic style seen in old European cottages, manors and castles. Although traditional German Smear involves white mortar over red brick, unique designs can be achieved with varying brick colors and mortar tints.



Avignon Handmade with Grapevine Joint in G-501 Mortar



Nob Hill with Overmortar



Anchor Bay with Concave Joint

See it before you live it.

Glen-Gery has 20 ready-made mortar colors, plus an unlimited number of custom colors available.

To experience the different mortar colors and their effects on brick, try Glen-Gery's virtual design tool, Picture Perfect, that helps visualize projects with any Glen-Gery building product.

Find your style at glengery.com/visualizer





Discover the possibilities at glengery.com

A BRAND OF

BRICKWORKS

Cover image: Nob Hill with Overmortar

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